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The rule: "Strong verbs with vowel *e* change this *e* into *ie* in the 2d and 3d pers. sing. and in the imperative" is not correct. A few verbs taken from the author's own list will disprove his rule: *scheren*, *stehen*, *weben*, *gehen*, *genesen*, *heben*, *melken*, and many more.

III. THE GENDER.

Homer nodded when the rule was penned that nouns ending in *-er* are masculine. There are any number of fem. and neut. nouns ending in *-er*. Nor is the rule correct that nouns ending in *-en* are masc., except *das Leben*, and infinitives when used as nouns. Cf. *das Becken*, *Laken*, *Kissen*, *Wappen*, *Zeichen*, etc.

The Essentials of the Direct Method.*

By **Prof. Anton Appelman**, Uni. of Vermont.

Whatever I may say in the course of this brief address concerning the Direct or Reform Method is purely subjective opinion derived from personal experience as a teacher here and abroad, and refers first of all to the teaching of German.

Charles Hart Handschin in his pamphlet, "*The Teaching of Modern Languages*," U. S. Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 3 (510), 1913, says of the Direct Method: "It makes use of all that is valuable in the other methods, and thus may be considered an eclectic method which is eminently adapted to our modern education with its varied demands." The year 1882 is commonly recognized as the year of the birth of the Direct Method, the time when Wilhelm Viëtor published his remarkable book: "*Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren*" by Q.(uosque) T.(andem). Professor Viëtor, himself a phonetician, laid the greatest stress in modern language instruction upon the phonetic drill. Dr. Max Walter who, through his famous *Musterschule* in Frankfurt a. M., became the strongest practical advocate of the Direct Method, adheres warmly to the use of phonetics, but, in cases where the result can be more quickly attained, he does not hesitate to employ the method of imitation in the teaching of pronunciation just as did the so much criticised Natural Method.

The most prominent exponents of the Direct Method in this country are divided. Some, as Eduard Prokosch, cling rather closely to phonetics; others, like Carl A. Krause, the efficient champion of the Walter Method

* From an address delivered before the Vermont Group of the New England Modern Language Association, April 21, 1917.

in this country, compromise (for German at least) between phonetics and imitation, (cf. his book "*The Direct Method*," Scribner's, N. Y., 1916).

All the advocates of the Direct Method seem to agree, however, that we cannot entirely dispense with *Phonetics*. The instructor himself should be well versed in this branch, since the articulation of certain sounds which are not to be found in the native vernacular can hardly be accomplished without the help of phonetics. Phonetics, however, should never become an end in itself, but merely a means to an end. In the good elementary publications in this line by Carl A. Krause and particularly those by Eduard Prokosch, the teacher is given, in a simple but clear form, all the necessary material. It is evident that the quality of the instructor's own pronunciation is a large factor in the determining of the amount of practice needed in phonetics; and in this respect we must examine ourselves very closely. Even the native teacher drops easily into certain provincialisms to which he became accustomed in his youth, and for each foreign language there should be but one standard of pronunciation.

It goes without saying that the Direct Method makes the *foreign language the medium of instruction*. The student hears his native tongue very little, if at all, during a modern language recitation. Grammatical rules, of course, are explained in the mother tongue and the pupil answers in the same way; but even here we can do without the native speech to a great extent; this the more since abstract grammar is seldom or never to be recited. It is always given in an applied form and studied from concrete examples in complete sentences. Instead of the student's telling all about the French reflexive verbs forming their perfect tenses with "être," or the verbs of motion in German with "sein" or whatever else the old dusty incorrect rules may be, he should hear and repeat again and again: je me suis promené; ich bin spazieren gegangen. Only in this way can we create the "*Sprachgefühl*" recognized by everyone as necessary to the understanding of any modern language. Goethe, in his Faust, rightly says: "Wenn Ihr's nicht fühlt, Ihr werdet's nicht erjagen."

But to return to the question of *grammar*: I see no reason why the instructor should not use the foreign language, whenever asking for grammatical rules (if asked at all) or for disconnected short, model sentences. I believe, also, that the student—certainly the advanced one—should study the grammatical rule in the foreign tongue (recitation in the vernacular, of course) because by laboring to grasp its full meaning, he will understand and remember the rule much better than if he merely glances over it, as so often happens, without attentive study. For occasional repetition and brief review, the grammar may be given and studied in the native language.

The charge that the Direct Method neglects grammar is too absurd to be answered, although I gladly admit that it condenses the grammar to its most essential elements. But these it does teach (inductively of course) and repeat over and over again. Whoever opens any of Scribner's Direct Method texts, the German known as the *Walter-Krause Series*, the French as the *Walter-Ballard Series*, will soon see that grammar (in applied form) easily makes up one third of the entire material offered. And what is the purpose of those many questions to be answered if not for drill in rendering the contents in grammatically correct German or French? In fact, it has been said by some of the old fashioned opponents that these texts were too much intermingled with grammatical exercises. With these two diametrically opposed charges against the Direct Method, of too much and too little grammar, we should feel comfortable on the isle of safety that lies between.

For *drill in grammatical rules*, every Direct Method book contains ample material in the form of half finished sentences which are to be completed or remolded and connected by various kinds of conjunctions, adverbs, etc. For *drill in idiomatic expressions*, in the advanced stages of study, I believe, perhaps in contrast to some strict adherents of the Direct Method, that a certain small amount of translation carefully handled is advisable, because a student who has already seen and fully understood a certain idiomatic expression will better remember it and grasp its full value when brought face to face with the particular vernacular expression to which it corresponds. In the study of a foreign language there are, in my opinion, two phases which I like to call an active and a passive knowledge: the passive knowledge which enables us to read, perhaps to recognize, if you please, fairly intelligently and to understand pretty thoroughly a foreign language; the active knowledge which empowers us, having at all times the correct idiom at our disposal, to converse freely and fully in the foreign tongue. In order to gain the latter it may be desirable, as stated above, to do some little translating so that the student through comparison may become better versed and more firmly established in the foreign idiom.

The Direct Method, furthermore, calls, even in the early stages of instruction, for "*Free Composition*," which is to be written on simple topics of everyday life; for instance, "*Our House, My Visit to New York*," etc. The student is to write very short and simple sentences which he should draw from the knowledge he has thus far obtained. He should write directly in the foreign language and never translate from sentences first formulated in his native tongue. The use of the dictionary should be limited as much as possible in modern language instruction. We should compel our students to think more and to work out for themselves the

meanings of words, particularly of compound words. Through constant practice in learning synonyms, antonyms, etc., the vocabulary will be rapidly enlarged and in such a way that a dictionary, in the early stages of language study at least, becomes a superfluous luxury. The correcting of compositions and written work in general will be discussed later.

Reading (Reading *matter*) is to be regarded as the center of instruction. And with the foreign language as the medium of instruction, we can well afford to eliminate the old time conversation course, because there is conversation at all times. The "*Realien*," real things, objects, and lessons, of every day life, the history, geography, constitution, of the people whose language is studied, their customs and ways of living and thinking, must furnish much of the reading material. It will naturally build up an everyday vocabulary for real household use, which will enable the student to buy his typical ticket in French or to order the oft-cited sandwich in German. For the building up of this sort of a vocabulary, the old Gouin Series Method which Professor Handschin, Miami University, used in his elementary German lessons might still give us good suggestions. But one should avoid the mistake, which is too easily made when following this method; namely, that the vocabulary, the knowledge, is built up, as is so wrongly recommended, in the form of concentric rings, with the knowledge and vocabulary ever widening. But concentric rings never touch one another and that is the great crux. The Direct Method instructor must build up his vocabulary in a spiral form, where, starting from a small point, one thing always grows out of another and the knowledge, developing harmoniously and naturally, acquires larger and larger dimensions. The schoolroom, the immediate and wider surroundings, should be drawn into the conversation; and wherever the book used does not supply it, the teacher might well devote a few minutes every day to building up his own vocabulary by speaking and dictating something about the material at hand. The instructor can move freely on the above mentioned spiral, sometimes beginning at the origin and quickly running up to the remotest point or vice versa.

It is obvious that *translation* into the mother tongue, as a rule, becomes superfluous so long as we have simple elementary texts before us. It may become necessary, to a small extent, in advanced classes when we encounter more difficult constructions. And wherever we do give a translation, we should keep the rule in mind: *As literal as possible and as free as necessary*. The question of the reading of a text is then easily answered. It will be direct and smooth and without the long interruptions caused by repetition and turning back for grammatical analysis or discussion of difficult words. Instead of this the instructor will call attention to these as they are first read, stopping the student for a few seconds, even in the

midst of a sentence, to ask, for example: "Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire en anglais? traduisez la dernière partie, or: Welches sind die Stammformen von Nennen Sie ein deutsches Synonym zu Geben Sie das Gegenteil von Ersetzen Sie das letzte Wort durch ein anderes deutsches" etc. This can be done so quickly that the connection and sense of the sentence are by no means lost.

It is needless to say that the instructor, before allowing the books to be opened and before beginning the reading, will have ascertained, by detailed *questions in the foreign language* about the vocabulary and contents of the text, that the pupils are thoroughly familiar with the lesson assigned. The questions, of course, will be short and every student given frequent opportunity to show his preparation. More than once I have chanced to hear students say, "I hope he won't call on me today." I fail to see how it is possible that an instructor should not call several times on everyone of the students during every recitation, even if there were more than fifty in the class. But, in order to do that, the instructor must devote almost the entire hour to oral work without wasting much time to write on the blackboard. I say "wasting," and I mean what I say, because I contend that the blackboard should not be used too extensively in the teaching of German, where the spelling, if pronunciation was taught properly, causes little difficulty. It is different, of course, with French and English. This does not mean, however, that I want to do away with written work. On the contrary, I believe that the student should write out something for every recitation and that the instructor should give frequent dictations—*Nulla dies sine linea*.—Very well, but what about the battle cry of the present day reformers against overburdening our students? I certainly am heart and soul in favor of such an idea wherever it applies, but I believe that our average American secondary school pupil with a schedule of about twenty-two hours and the college student with about eighteen hours per week, are not overburdened with study. In this respect they fortunately (or unfortunately?) differ from their European fellow students, especially the German gymnasist, who carries a weekly schedule of about thirty actual recitation hours. There, indeed, is danger of overworking. What I meant, when advocating written home work and not so much writing on the blackboard, is that I do not believe in regularly calling a student to the board and having him write out some sentences from either his text or his own or his neighbor's note book, and then the instructor going over the sentences, or the student exchanging their note books and correcting one another's papers, because it is hard to make sure in this way whether each student has properly done his work, and particularly because the average student is unable to find and correct his own mistakes. Of course there are many roads that lead to Rome, but the main object we should keep in mind is to economize time, since so

little of it is allotted to the study of modern languages. It is for this reason, for the sake of efficiency, that I believe the students should hand in their written work every day for the instructor to look over and hand back at the very next recitation. The more frequent mistakes, of which the instructor has made note when looking over the papers, should be discussed at the beginning of the hour, then the papers are carefully corrected by the students at home and the corrections handed in again with the new work, and again looked over by the instructor. To be sure, every paper is graded as carefully as a class test and everything, even re-examination papers, returned to the student, so that he himself may judge his work and profit by the example his teacher's labor and careful justice sets him. This demands no small amount of work from us, but the results are astounding and highly gratifying. And then, by being progressive and protecting "His Majesty the Child" against overwork, we can well protect ourselves against the same evil—and indeed we must admit that many instructors, particularly in secondary schools, certainly are overworked—by assigning for written work very short problems and by requiring the students to have their compositions brief and concise. *Non multa, sed multum!*

To speak of *reading* once more: In the early stages, the *Chorus Reading* nets good results, but the instructor must notice and correct every mistake and have all the students take part.

A word should be said about the so-called *Reading Method* which, in recent years, has been so much advertised and so eagerly adopted by many technical and professional schools. This method—in no way related to the Direct Method, by the way—teaches only the most essential grammatical rules, this usually with the help of a very small grammar in the vernacular. Speaking and pronunciation receive but slight, if any, attention. I see very little advantage in such a method, yet it may serve certain purposes. This method, to be sure, has nothing in common with the so-called "scientific" German and French of olden days, against the teaching of which I venture to launch a strong protest. I ask you frankly: Is there such a thing as scientific English, French, German? NO! Why then teach it? The German merchant, who years ago had developed such an awkward bombastic style, which he himself in many cases could not understand, has disappeared and the merchant of today writes as the rest of us do. Consequently, there is no excuse for a book such as Kuttner's "Commercial German," or similar unfortunate productions. What then are we to do with our Botany and Engineering students, for instance, who wish to acquire that much-praised "reading knowledge" of German or French? What they need is at least one year of thorough drill and constant practice in elementary grammar without any "scientific" reading

whatever. The Direct Method will be of great benefit to them. In the first half of their second year they should briefly review the grammar and improve their general knowledge in order better to understand the grammatical structure of the modern language. Later, when the class takes up the reading of classical texts, the Chemists and Engineers might be excused to read, instead, scientific books relating to their own particular profession. From time to time the instructor should help them, explain difficult passages to them and by oral examination make sure of their progress in building up their own special and professional vocabulary. In large institutions it is easy, after the students have received a good elementary training, to form special classes for prospective Chemists, Zoologists, Merchants and others. Smaller schools, however, should shift as best they can in the above mentioned way.

One of the most essential points in the teaching of the Direct Method is to create the proper "atmosphere" in the classroom, to have both teacher and pupil get into the right enthusiastic "Direct Method mood." Every teacher desires a great deal of *fresh air* and *sunshine* in his room. Figuratively speaking, it is just this which we need in the teaching of the Direct Method; much good, healthy, stimulating fresh air and plenty of the sunshine of satisfaction, joy and happiness. A teacher should never feel too dignified to indulge occasionally in a hearty laugh with his class. He should not fear to discuss at times with his boys and girls the things that are alive, up-to-date, and uppermost in their minds. A few questions on the baseball game, which is to take place in the afternoon, on the dance the youth is looking forward to, the way in which to introduce a person, etc., or the reception which was given by the president or principal and the people they met there and the things they had to eat and to drink, form welcome topics for little discussions in the foreign language. "Mehr wirkliches Leben und wärmenden Sonnenschein in die Schule" should be our slogan.

Permit me, in conclusion, briefly to sum up what I consider the essentials of the Direct Method:

1. The *foreign language* is to be used as the *medium of instruction*, even in the teaching of grammar, so far as the latter is possible and advisable.
2. A *good pronunciation* is to be taught from the very beginning with the help of *elementary phonetics* for sounds which are hard to learn through imitation.
3. *Grammar* (taught inductively) is to be learned through constant drill in complete sentences in the foreign tongue rather than by the memorizing of dry abstract rules in the vernacular.

4. "*Free Composition*" forms the main part of written work.
5. Thorough *discussion* in the foreign language of the assigned lesson before the daily reading is taken up.
6. Really intelligent *reading*, and reading only, at least in the early stages, where occasional *chorus reading* is advisable.
7. *Translation* is reduced to the minimum.
8. "*Realien*" must be given closest attention.
9. Both student and instructor must be inspired by *enthusiastic love for and lively interest in their work*.

Berichte und Notizen.

I. Korrespondenzen.

Baltimore.

Der Deutschunterricht in unseren Elementarschulen ist durch Schulratsbeschluss mit dem neuen Schuljahr eingestellt worden. Die 1874 mit so vielen Hoffnungen gegründeten und in den ersten zwei Jahrzehnten zu so schöner Blüte gelangten Englisch-Deutschen Stadtschulen sind nicht mehr. Wer den an dieser Stelle in der jüngsten Dezemberrummer erschienenen Bericht mit Bedacht durchlas, wird durch diese leidige Tatsache nicht überrascht sein. Es sind die Eltern deutschen Stammes, die durch Gleichgültigkeit und Unverständnis zu diesem Endergebnis ganz wesentlich beigetragen haben. Von Jahr zu Jahr hatte sich so die Zahl der Deutschlernenden mehr und mehr vermindert, in manchen Schulen waren sie bis auf eine und zwei Klassen zusammengeschrumpft. Und das trotz aller Ermahnungen und trotz der schlagendsten Hinweise auf den erzieherischen Wert des Deutschunterrichts. Nur mit Mühe kann der Schreiber seine Gefühle unterdrücken. —

Wie wenig übrigens die höchste Erziehungsbehörde unseres Landes den erzieherischen Wert des Deutschunterrichts in den Elementarschulen erkennt, zeigt ein bei der betreffenden Schulratsitzung verlesenes Schreiben des Erziehungskommissärs Claxton in Washington, worin es u. a. heisst:

"The policy of teaching a foreign language to children of foreign parents in the elementary public schools

originated when the immigration to this country was almost wholly from Northern European countries, and when most of the non-English speaking immigrants were from Germany. Within recent years our immigration has been from almost all the countries of Europe, and the continuation of this policy, therefore, and its extension to all the language groups become practically impossible. I am of the opinion, therefore, that it should be discontinued, and the ends which might under the most favorable circumstances be obtained through it should be sought in other ways."

Genug für diesmal. —

Carl Otto Schönrich.

Evansville.

Am 7. Juni hielten die deutschen Lehrkräfte der Evansville Schulen eine *Schlussfeier* ab. Diese fand im Hause unserer Kollegin Margaret Geiss statt. Die Festlichkeit war gleichzeitig eine *Abschiedsfeier* für zwei Lehrerinnen, die nach mehr als 35jährigem Dienst sich in den Ruhestand zurückziehen. Die Jubilarinnen waren *Frl. Anna Doerr* und *Frl. Clara Kehr*. Einige Kolleginnen führten ein kurzes Lustspiel auf, mit welchem eine allgemeine Beschenkung und insbesondere eine Beschenkung der Jubilarinnen verbunden war. Zwei Kollegen trugen Lieder vor, und andere hielten Reden zur Ehre der austretenden Lehrerinnen. *Supervisor J. H. Henke* hielt die Hauptansprache, in